## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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- (a) a nucleic acid encoding a protein comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 or a fragment thereof;
  - (b) a nucleic acid comprising a coding region of the nucleotide sequence of SEO ID NO:1;
  - (c) a nucleic acid encoding a protein that comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, in which one or more amino acids are substituted, deleted, inserted and/or added and that is functionally equivalent to a protein consisting of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2;
  - (d) a nucleic acid that hybridizes under stringent conditions with a nucleic acid consisting of the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1, and that encodes a protein functionally equivalent to a protein consisting of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2; and
  - (e) a nucleic acid encoding a protein that has at least 60% identity to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2.
  - 2. An isolated nucleic acid encoding the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 or a fragment thereof.
  - 3. The nucleic acid of claim 1, wherein the number of amino acids substituted, deleted, inserted and/or added is 30 or fewer.
- 4. The nucleic acid of claim 1, wherein the nucleic acid encodes a fusion protein comprising a first amino acid sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO:2 fused to a second amino acid sequence.
  - 5. A vector into which the nucleic acid of claim 1 is inserted.
- 6. A vector into which the nucleic acid of claim 2 is inserted.
  - 7. A transformant harboring the nucleic acid of claim 1.

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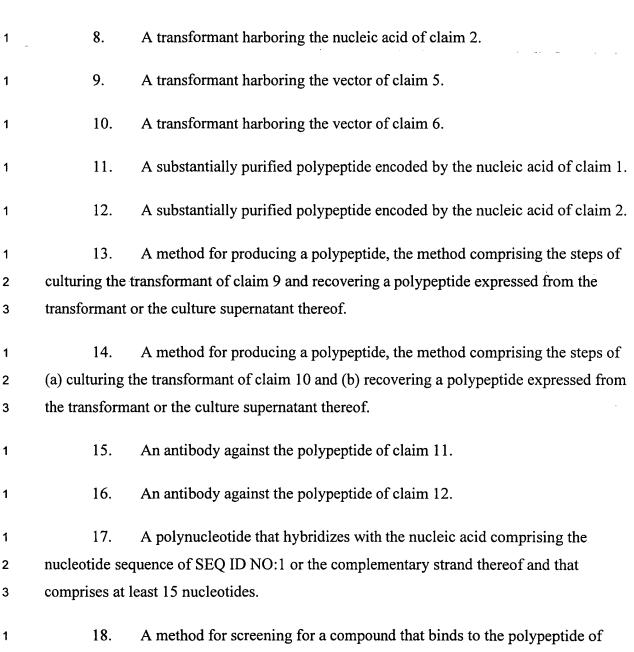
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- 18. A method for screening for a compound that binds to the polypeptide of claim 11, the method comprising the steps of:
  - (a) contacting a test sample with the polypeptide or a partial peptide thereof,
- (b) detecting a binding activity of the test sample to the polypeptide or the partial peptide thereof, and
- (c) selecting a compound comprising the binding activity to the polypeptide or the partial peptide thereof.

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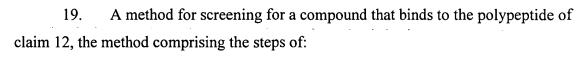
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- (a) contacting a test sample with the polypeptide or a partial peptide thereof,
- (b) detecting a binding activity of the test sample to the polypeptide or the partial peptide thereof, and
  - (c) selecting a compound comprising the binding activity to the polypeptide or the partial peptide thereof.
    - 20. A compound isolated by the method of claim 18.
- 21. A compound isolated by the method of claim 19.